

HalfLife 2 Episode 1: Urban Recon

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Summary: Suddenly the ground around him began moving, alive with creatures he was all too familiar with, "Zombies." Inside he was screaming at himself, he had dealt with enough of the monsters back in Black Mesa.

1. Chapter 1 Arriving Departure

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>Chapter 1 - Arriving Departure <p>Adrian awoke to find himself in darkness; he could feel nothing on the ground below him. It was strange, not smooth yet not rough. Not cold but not hot. Using his hands, he pushed himself to his feet, looking around only to find more darkness. As Adrian checked his clothes, he found himself still in his camo outfit. Useful vest, it was, amazing how it had kept him alive. Now to find out where he was. Instinct told him it was dark, he couldn't see a damn thing, so he did the logical thing and turned on his night vision. Everything tinted green, his goggles showing all secrets of the dark and surprisingly nothing had happened. Everything stayed dark, only difference was a green glow from his night vision.<p>

Turning the vision off, Adrian looked around and thought of what to do, but before he could try to move, something opened up. A blinding light shone onto Adrian's face as a man in blue with a briefcase in hand walked into the black abyss.

He stopped in front of Adrian, took a long, deep, drawn out breath, and said, "Welcome back, Corporal..." He paused, "Time, it seems, has turned to your favor." He took another gasp of air and continued, "The actions of, well, one of my 'employees,' to say the least, has triggered the need of your immediate dispatching."

"And, Corporal, things are not as they appear..." The man stepped

away from Adrian, turned, and stepped back into the light, which abruptly dispersed.

Adrian found himself in a state of awe, he had never seen such a thing in his life, a man appearing and disappearing, instantly. Almost immediately after the man with the briefcase had vaporized, Adrian felt himself leave the black abyss, leaving behind the deafening silence. He found himself in an even more ear piercing environment, he was all too familiar with this sound, the sounds of gun clatter, women crying, shouts for mercy, the sounds of "War." He said to himself.

He felt something hard below him, and suddenly it became clear to him. He opened his eyes, only to find himself in the wreckage of what looked like a helicopter. He stood, brushed himself off, only to find that he was no longer wearing his gasmask, he didn't mind it was worn out anyway. He figured he may need to find something to defend himself in this God forsaken city, he began to search the wreckage of the crumpled piece of steel that was a helicopter. He foraged through the passenger compartment to find nothing but empty shell casings and blood splattered across the wall and seat next to where he had awakened. He thought to himself, "I have to find _something_." Just then he noticed it, just up the aisle from where he stood, almost as if it was placed there just for him. Adrian walked over, crouched to his knees and picked it up. "A wrench? You've got to be kidding me!" He exclaimed, "Well, it looks as though I don't have much of choice."

As he left the minute safety of the destroyed chopper, wrench in hand, he knew that he must tread lightly, for he still had no understanding of what was happening. Then he noticed, what he had previously thought to have been snow, was in fact, ash. "If this is ash, where is it coming from?" He thought. Something drew his eyes toward the sky, there he saw a large grayish blue tower, exploding with flames and smoke from its peak. As he watched bolts of electricity arch away from the towering inferno, he was compelled to say, "What is that thing?"

Suddenly the ground around him began moving, alive with creatures he was all too familiar with, "Zombies, shit." Inside he was screaming at himself, he had dealt with enough of the monsters back in Black Mesa. He brought his wrench up, ready to strike the first zombie that came anywhere near his proximity. There was easily 15 zombies surrounding him, he stood ready and smashed his wrench into a zombie, which stumbled backward, regained its already unsteady footing and began shambling back toward Adrian. He took another hard swing at the zombie, this time striking it in the headcrab, which is the alien parasite that feeds on human flesh, latches itself onto the head of corpses and manipulates their body to do their bidding. The blow, though powerful, was only enough to knock the zombie down to the ground, where it began to crawl. "The things are relentless, why won't they just die already!" He yelled.

> Instantly, there was a loud bang and the body of the crawling zombie went limp, a bloody hole protruding through the head. "Hey, over here!" a voice called out from the rubble of a nearby building.<p>

"Get over here into safety!" it said. Adrian turned and ran through the crowd of zombies and toward the voice. Just as he reached the door to the building he heard, "Alright men, open fire!" followed by

hail of gunfire. Bullets tearing through the rotting flesh of the zombies. One by one, they each dropped to the ground and promptly died.

Adrian, satisfied to see that the zombies had been disposed of, opened the door and walked in. He was greeted at the door by a man in a green beanie, dirty, blue denim pants with a green shirt, topped off with some kind of blackish Kevlar vest with numerous straps and belts. His face was young, he couldn't have been older than 21, yet his face was tired, burdened with a lifetime of stress and fighting. He had a dark brown beard, grown out from the lack of the ability to shave. His eyes were a pleasant blue texture. He reached out with his glove covered and said, "Welcome, welcome to City 17." The man and his squad of about six grunts burst into laughter, realizing that Adrian wasn't laughing, the man stopped and said, "What? You've never seen the Breencasts before? Did you just wake up today or something?"

"Well, actually, I--" Adrian was cut off.
> "The name's Alfred, but everyone calls me Freddy." He said.<p>

Adrian reached out and shook Alfred's hand, "I'm Corporal Adrian Shephard, glad to have run into you at such an opportune time." Alfred nodded his head in agreement and motioned Adrian on into the next room. The room was old, it had torn, old wallpaper and a rotted wood floor. The room was completely empty apart from an old, beat up red couch, a wooden coffee table and a metal stool. Adrian sat down on the couch and Freddy walked over to the stool and lifted his right leg up and set it on the stool, putting him in a sort of crouched position. He asked, "So where did you come from?"

Adrian was puzzled, he didn't know how to respond, so he paused for a moment then said, "I was part of a Recon Team sent in to neutralize the threat at Black Mesa. Everything was going well on the ride over, but then suddenly we were struck by an alien spacecraft." He continued, "After being struck we crashed down into a fence and I passed out, I awoke in a room with a scientist, who had apparently saved my life. Well, long story short, I made it out of Black Mesa, but I can't remember how I got here--" Once again Alfred interrupted him.

"So you were one of the soldiers sent in to destroy Black Mesa?" He sounded angry, "You were sent to kill Freeman as well, and everyone on the Science Team!" He was shouting now.

"Yes, but I didn't know those were the orders, we were attacked before we received the objectives." Adrian explained. "My team and I did nothing to harm the Science Team, or Freeman, that I'm aware of anyway. But still, I don't have any idea how I got here--"

"You obviously didn't do anything to Freeman because it's been 10 years since Black Mesa, and he's the one that's caused this uprising against the Combine!" Alfred said. "But now we have to get out of here, Gordon blew the reactor in the Citadel and now the whole city is in danger."

Adrian was shocked to the point that he missed the emphasis in the sentence, "Wait, 10 years ago?" He questioned, "But I was just--" He stopped mid sentence, "I'd better not say anymore, they may think I'm

crazy." He thought.

"Okay, forget I said anything. What do we need to do to get out of this city?" Adrian asked.

Alfred was puzzle by Adrian, he decided to just push he thoughts aside for the moment and concentrate one getting out of the city. He got up, walked over to a map that was concealed behind some of the torn wallpaper. "Okay we are here," He pointed at the southern half of a map of what looked like the city, "Dr. Freeman is in an unknown position, he was last thought to be somewhere north of the Citadel, around this area." He pointed to a spot a good 30 miles away from where they were. "We're a lot closer to the forest than he is, but we're going to need all the time we can get to reach it. You see, Freeman isn't headed toward the woods like we are, between us and Freeman there is a train station, which they are planning to take a train from do into the forest where we are going." He pointed at the approximant position of the train station on the map. "As you can see, it would take longer to get to the train station than it would to reach the woods, as it is more densely populated with Combine and zombies toward the middle of the city."

"So, how do we go about sneaking through the city?" Adrian asked, overwhelmed by the sudden flow of information.

"We wait 'till daybreak, we take two hour jogs, 5 minute breaks, we can make it a good 15 miles before the day is over, it'll take us about 2 and a half days to reach the outskirts of the city, then all we have to worry about is the patrols." Alfred said. "Oh, and Adrian, since you obviously have more experience with combat than any of my men, you'll be my point man." He signaled for one of his men to come to him, "Johnson, could you please hand your weapon over to Corporal Shephard?" The man did not hesitate to hand over his weapon. He handed it to Alfred and pulled out his sidearm, making sure he was ready at all times.

Alfred held out the gun to Adrian, who reached for it. "Now you can put that silly wrench away, I trust you know how to use this." He said. "Of course, it's my job." Adrian was more than equip to handle such a weapon, he knew possibly everything there was to know about this such gun, it was a Heckler & Koch MP7 Submachine gun, it weighed approximately 2 kg with a full magazine of 40 specially designed rounds of 4.6 x 33 mm bullets. It came equip with a red dot laser sight, although this one seemed to have been modified with a more modern laser sight that Adrian hadn't seen before. It also had an attached grenade launcher, but no grenades.

"Well, Roger, it's your turn for watch duty, everyone else, get some shut eye, you'll need it for the road ahead." Alfred said.

2. Chapter 2 Dreaming Dismay

-Chapter Two: Dreaming Dismay

Adrian awoke, it was daybreak, but no one was anywhere to be seen, he quickly jumped to his feet, searching for any life form. He ran out the door and began shouting, screaming at the top of his lungs, "Hello?! Why did you leave me?!"

He heard shuffling in the wreckage behind him, he turned, only to see the zombified bodies of what had been his squad. They began limping toward him, he had no weapons. He cried out and fell to his knees as the undead corpses descended upon him. He screamed, but there was nothing to be heard, he kicked and pushed, but could not move and everything went dark. He tried with one last breath to shout as loud as he could.

"Adrian! Adrian! What's wrong?" A slightly familiar voice spoke to him.

Adrian opened his eyes, "What? What happened?" He questioned.

"You were dreaming, it sounded like a nightmare from what I could tell." Alfred said.

Adrian lifted himself up and leaned against the wall which was behind him. "It was strange, it was like a dream, but it seemed so real, I woke up and I was all by myself, I went outside and you were all zom--" Once more Alfred had cut him off mid-sentence.

"Well, it's daybreak, we've gatta get moving." He said, "We can't linger, the Citadel is sending out swarms of scanners, if they find us, we'll be totally exposed to the Combine." He promptly got up and began walking towards the door, "Whaddaya say men, ready to get out of this damned city?"

He was answered with a barrage of 'You'd better believe it!' and 'Hell yes!' Adrian simply got to his feet and sternly said, "Sir, yes, sir!"

"Alright, Corporal Shephard, you'll be leading, remember, you're the point man now." Alfred said as he kicked the door open for no apparent reason. Everyone began running toward the door, including Adrian, who found himself thinking, "Wow, Alfred really knows how to get his squad excited."

They started their jog off strong, with a lot of cheering and happiness, but suddenly everyone fell silent, it seemed everyone had realized that they were now in unfriendly territory, the streets were riddled with the corpses of Rebels and Combine alike. It was very humbling, now Adrian knew what they were fighting for, they weren't fighting because they needed to, but because the species needed to. If they didn't fight back against their oppressors, the species would be destroyed.

Suddenly Adrian heard gunfire, followed by a sharp pain in his left shoulder, he fell to the floor, rolling in pain. "Sniper!" Alfred yelled out, and began running toward Adrian, he crabbed him by his black and white camouflage jacket and began dragging him toward cover. "Where are you hit?!" He yelled.

"In the left shoulder, I think it's just a graze," He breathed, "I think I'll be alright."

"You're one lucky man, Shephard, those snipers almost never miss!" He exclaimed, "Let me just patch this up really quick and we'll work on that sniper." He pulled some medical wrap out of his backpack and wrapped it tightly around his arm. "You're good to go!"

Just then, Roger, the one who was on guard duty the night before ran up to them, he said, "Freddy, I can flush that sniper out with my grenade if I can just get some covering fire." He stopped for a breath, "Shephard, are you up to that?"

Adrian nodded, "Yes, sir." He picked up his MP7 and counted down from three. "Three, two, one!" Roger sprinted across the street and ducked behind a overturned military APC, Adrian giving him the necessary covering fire by firing bursts in the direction of the enemy. Roger continued by running further down the road and behind a chunk of building that had been destroyed. He was directly under the window in which the sharpshooter was hiding, and without hesitation he lobbed the grenade up into the window. Instantly he began running as fast as he could in a straight path back to the safety of the cover. But unluckily the sniper was still unaware of the presence of the grenade behind him and as Roger fled he fired a fatal shot, it pierced Roger straight through the back of the heart, a bloodcurdling scream leaped from his lips. Blood protruding from his chest in a stream, he dropped to the black ashy ground, and died. Just as the shot was fired, the grenade exploded, throwing the sniper through the window where he landed on sharp metal and debris below. "No!" Adrian screamed, running from the cover toward his fallen comrade.

"What are you thinking! They definitely have backup on the way! We need to evacuate quickly!" Alfred yelled at him. "We can't just leave him here!" Adrian yelled back, "Never leave a man behind, that was the rule!" Alfred came towards him, "That was the rule, Adrian, we're in a different time now, people die all the time, we can't worry about everyone." He paused, "The only thing you can do is pray that God has mercy on him. You'd do best to take his weapon as well, you'll need it more than he will."

Adrian realizing that Alfred knew more about what he was talking than himself, picked up Roger's .357 Magnum Revolver, his 12 Gauge Combat Shotgun and all the ammunition he could hold. He stood and walked back toward the group, tossing the H&K MP7 back to Johnson, who was the one who provided him with it before. "Thanks Johnson, I wish I could have been more helpful with it." He began walking in the direction of the forest. Everyone followed.

The day passed without any further confrontation, it went quickly also. Time seemed to fly when all you had to do was run, Adrian thought. Which was another thing Adrian got to do a lot of now, a lot of thinking, he often thought about how things had been before this had all happened. He was young, but now he could see no future past this city. He was sure he would die there.

Nightfall came, and they found an abandoned hotel in front of what looked like a town square, it had a large spire, which had once held up a TV monitor, broadcasting Breen's lies to everything and everyone it overlooked. They proceeded cautiously into the hotel, checking every room for any possible threat, it was clear. They all slept in the same room, to prevent anyone from being caught off guard. Adrian sat in the corner, isolating himself from the rest of the group, he was still upset about the death of Roger. He was mad that he couldn't save him and mad that he couldn't at least bury him. But he knew that Alfred was right, and that angered him. He figured that he should try and get some sleep, at least that would get his mind off things.

He woke up to the sound of moaning, a deep, dark moan. There was a

dark figure in corner opposite of him. He waited for his eyes to adjust, but he still couldn't make it out. He got to his feet, shotgun in hand and began walking toward it. He was sure in his mind that this thing in front of him was in fact a zombie. Just as he reached the object, it turned to face him, now exposed in the rising sunlight he could clearly tell it was a zombie. But Adrian was terrified to see that the corpse that the headcrab had occupied was that of Roger. He was completely frozen in place, afraid to move. The zombie raised its arm to strike, and just before it could swing, a shot rang out behind Adrian. The zombie dropped to the floor, its back leaning against the wall, as it bled to death it reached out to grab Adrian, though he was out of his reach. The green and red blood trickled down Roger's body. The zombie cried out as if it were suffering beyond comprehension. Adrian could see it suffer no longer, he lifted his shotgun, leveled the sights on the zombie's head, and fired. An explosion of flesh and bone splattered on the walls and all over Adrian. "Sorry, Roger." Was all he could think to say.

End
file.